FUNERAL SERMON

OF THE

REV. JOHN ROBINSON, D. D.

LATE PASTOR OF POPLAR TENT CHURCH,

PREACHED AT POPLAR TENT,

FEBRUARY 22d, 1844,

BY

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DAN. 12: 3.

"And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever."

It is no common event which calls us together to-day. When a man whose life and labors were identified, to a large extent, with the good of society and the prosperity of the Church for fifty years, is called to surrender all connexion with earthly objects, and enter upon a higher work, and nobler scenes of enjoyment; those who meet to venerate his memory and learn wisdom from his example, should be impressed with the solemnity of their circumstances.

It is not our purpose to dwell upon the dark scenes and trying bereavements which death brings with it. We are called by our text and by the occasion too, to look above the grounds of sorrow, and beyond the ravages of death. We are called to contemplate the spirit of the good man, having laid down its burdens in the grave, being freed from its imperfections, and fully sanctified in all its powers, going to its permanent home, its highest work, and its bright and everlasting reward. It pertains to the Gospel to reveal the certain connexion between the work of the righteous below, and the reward of the righteous above. Death alone spreads its narrow boundary between the family of believers on earth, and the congregation of the *just made perfect in Heaven.*

In the context, as generally throughout the Scriptures, the certainty of a future state, and of the interminable distinction between the righteous and the wicked, is held forth as an established truth. Our text then reveals the peculiar reward of Ministers of the Gospel, who prove their wisdom by gaining their own salvation and the salvation of others. *They that be wise*, or wise teachers of the truth, *shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever.*

The word *righteousness* has various shades of meaning in the Bible, as applied to different objects. It may here be taken to mean, as it does in some other places, *holiness of character.*

We have here placed before us the great end of the Gospel Ministry. It is, to *turn men to righteousness.* It is very evident, that the state from which men need to be turned, is one of guilt, corruption and fearful condemnation. No painful labors or exhausting sufferings would be necesary to turn sinners to righteousness if they possessed it by nature.

Not only the mediation of Christ, but all his provisions of mercy, ordained to convey its blessings to the souls of men, proclaim the utter ruin of human nature by sin. And sin, let it be remembered, has achieved this ruin, by separating our affections from God, the only proper object of supreme love, and the only source of true happiness.

We need then a Redemption commensurate with our deep and growing wretchedness as sinners, claiming the exalted design, and possessing the all-sufficient power of restoring the heart to God.

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The terms here used, are in accordance with all the teachings of God's word on this subject, and denote not only the fact, that we need restoration, but teach the nature and extent of this restoration.

We are restored to a safe condition, by being restored to a holy character. When pardon is found, purity is given. When our persons are justified by the righteousness of Christ, our affections are renewed by the spirit of God. Jehovah will bestow forgiving and enriching grace upon all who come to him aright; but he will prove them to be his children by exterminating the spirit of rebellion and the corruptions of a wicked heart. *If any man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of his.*

We may turn from insensibility to anxiety, and from anxiety to outward reformation, and from external decency to a punctual observance of all the forms of religion; but it will avail nothing unless we turn to righteousness: that elevating and abiding rectitude of heart, which brings all the desires and purposes and actions of the soul into conformity to God's will.

The ministry of reconciliation has been ordained, not barely to mould the customs, improve the manners, and adorn the outward condition of men, but to turn them from sin to holiness, from the bondage of satan to the service of God. Its high and sacred commission can only be fulfilled by subduing those vices which degrade the character, destroy the peace, and ruin the souls of transgressors; and restoring them to those principles of obedience which give happiness on earth, and prepare for happiness in Heaven.

Too often the great end of this ministry has been overlooked, and its richest blessings forfeited, by regarding chiefly its influence upon the temporal condition of men. The power which it exerts upon the domestic, social and public relations of society, has led many to foster it from secular designs and to pervert it to the exclusive promotion of worldly interests. All such encroachments upon the purpose for which Christ has instituted the ministry, not only obscure its glory, but abridge its power.

The preaching of the Gospel does bestow rich and innumerable blessings upon the *life that now is;* but it does so, when its power is distinctly and divinely exerted in preparing men for the *life that is to come.* Whenever it becomes the wisdom and power of God in training them for immortal life, it will wield a benignant energy in making them upright and useful and happy citizens of this world.

But let the heralds of the Cross cease to be the advocates of God's truth and the messengers of his mercy in *winning souls* to Christ, and they will cease to exert any good influence, worthy of being estimated, upon the temporal interests of men. Just in proportion then as we prize the abounding and fertilizing streams of good which the Gospel opens and replenishes on earth, should be the fervency of our prayers, that all who preach it, and all who hear it, may be deeply impressed with the wisdom and mercy of God in giving to it an end, adequate to all the wants of time and the destinies of of Eternity: *to turn men to righteousness.*

The bare statement of what is implied in this work, shews its importance and the responsibility connected with it. As you love your property or health or honor or life, you prize the benevolent and judicious interference which saves either of them from being destroyed. But a deliverance is al-

ways great in proportion to the value of what is saved, and the nature of the danger from which it is rescued. How then can you estimate that agency which God makes effectual in saving an immortal mind from the guilt, pollution and coming perdition of sin, and restoring that mind to the favor and image and presence of Jehovah? To do this, you must have the power of measuring the depths and woes of Tophet and of conceiving what a soul, under a vivid sense of its own turpitude and God's wrath, is capable of becoming and enduring in a progression of eternal sinning and eternal suffering! To do it, you must be able to travel on with that redeemed and sanctified mind in its translation from all that is to be feared or hated, to a place of light and love and joy, and comprehend its employments and number its praises in the temple of God forever and ever! No conceivable renovation of the whole material system, can be compared in permanent grandeur, to the salvation of one soul. And yet to save not one, but many souls, the Ministers of Christ are authorized to preach and encouraged to pray. Their highest wisdom is proved *in winning souls.* Their work begins and ends, standing in Christ's stead, and *beseeching men to be reconciled to God. Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.*

That work must be important, in which the footsteps of God's own son may be traced. That cause ought to command attention, which was advocated by his voice. That subject is surely one of interest, which engaged his heart and drew forth his prayers and his tears. He was not anointed to remodel earthly kingdoms or sway an earthly sceptre; *but to preach the gospel to the meek, to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison doors to them that were bound.*

To a certain extent the advancement of Christ's mediatorial work is committed to his Ministers. They are commissioned to expound his doctrines, enforce his laws, and to reveal, in his name, the rich provisions of Redeeming Mercy. By their instrumentality the triumphs of the Cross are extended, the kingdom of righteousness enlarged and the glory of the Saviour promoted. They are reapers in that harvest which gathers the fruits of his sufferings and death.

Any adequate conception of the magnitude of this work must lead all faithful men to exclaim: *Who is sufficient for these things?* No man can be presumed to have gained the first qualification for a vocation so high and holy, who is not overwhelmed, at times, with a sense of the responsibility it imposes. Were it not a fact, that *all their sufficiency is of God,* the purest spirits on earth might shrink with dismay, from even the threshold of such a work.

When Preachers of the truth are said to *turn many to righteousness,* we cannot mistake the meaning so far as to suppose, this to be the result of their own wisdom or strength, unaided and unblest. Men are often said to do that which they are only instruments in God's hand of effecting. And if there be any employment in which they depend untirely upon God for assistance, and without which their labors will accomplish nothing, it is certainly this. *Paul may plant and Apollos may water, but God gives the increase.*

What can frail and sinful men do, in attempting to counteract the rebellion of the heart, the corruptions of the world, and the powers of the devil with-

out the influences of God's spirit? Those who are left to themselves so far as to expect any fruits in this field, without an humble and constant reliance upon Divine Influence, will manifest only the extent of their presumption, and the vanity of their efforts.

The reward of faithful Ministers is here made known: *they shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars forever and ever.* The *firmament* seems here to mean, that clear and wide expanse in which the Heavenly bodies are placed. When God had made the Sun, Moon and Stars we are told he *set them in the firmament of the Heavens to give light upon the earth.* The brightness of the firmament is then derived from the shining of those luminaries placed in it by God. That it is used in Scripture as an emblem of purity and splendor appears from Ezekiel's vision. *And the likeness of the firmament upon the heads of the living creatures was as the color of the terrible crystal.* Pure, clear and splendid was the appearance.

The Stars too are objects of commanding and permanent brightness.—Those of them belonging to our system at least, shine not by their own light; but derive all their brightness from the Sun. They are not only enlightened by his beams, but held in their orbits by his attraction, and if the abodes of life and fruitfulness, as is probable, derive all their warmth from him as their centre. These are the objects selected by the inspired pen to show the distinction which awaits his servants. Far beyond the reach of clouds and darkness and storms incident to earth, the Stars pour forth their brilliancy and speak the wisdom, power and goodness of God.

Ministers now, as well as others, inhabit a land of sorrow. Darkness presses upon their minds and broods all around them. Within they are harassed with imperfections and fears. Without they are assailed by temptations and dangers. Their bodies are clogs to devotion and subject to languor, disease and death. Wherever their affections are placed sorrow may enter, and disappointment invade. Their friends and families may suffer and must die.—When their eyes are opened, they must look upon fraud and deceit and oppression and malice in their frightful train of evils. When their ears are not closed, they must hear the groans of the afflicted and the accents of abounding iniquity. In addition to the trials which they suffer in common with other men, there are many peculiar to their work. Often when standing before men as the Messengers of Christ, they are compelled to say: *my leanness, my leanness, woe unto me!* Often they fear, that while trying to lead others in the path to Heaven, their own footsteps may not be found in it. The message they are bound in fidelity to God to deliver, is unwelcome in its whole tenour to the ungodly, and they see it rejected day after day, by their neighbors, their friends, and in many cases, even by their own families. Their prayers and tears and intreaties are not only liable to be unappreciated and misconstrued, but often they fear, they are unavailing. When they look abroad they see error assailing the doctrines of Christ, invading the peace of the Church and opening the floodgates of iniquity.

But the day is coming when the ambassadors of Christ shall be called to lay down their commissions below, and go home to the kingdom of God.—What the *new Heavens and new Earth*, may fully mean, we do not know. It is enough for us at present to know, that they will constitute the dwelling place of peace and joy and love, without the mixture of evil or fear of change.

There holy men, and holy angels, and above all, a Holy Saviour will reign. With incorruptible bodies, and enlarged faculties of mind and pure affections, the servants of God will take their places, where no darkness or sin or sorrow or enemies or death shall ever invade. To the immortal residence of truth and righteousness they shall go, prepared to adore and love and praise God as the source of *joy unspeakable and full of glory.* There they will stand among the family of the redeemed, *turned from darkness to light and from the power of satan to God.* There they will take part in the song—*unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us Kings and Priests unto God and his Father. To him be glory and dominion forever and ever.*

What the minds of sanctified men are capable of knowing and becoming, when freed from all the imperfections incident to this life, and placed in a situation where every thing will conspire to enlarge and adorn their powers, is not for us now to conceive. In this state of existence reason and science cannot penetrate the veil which covers the secrets of nature, to say nothing of the spiritual kingdom of Jehovah. Hereafter it is probable God will withhold the knowledge of nothing which adoring spirits may know with profit. To study his perfections as displayed in his works will then be the ennobling and transporting employment of *just men made perfect.*

The departments of Creation, the dispensations of Providence, and the wonders of Redemption may then be unfolded in their harmonious accomplishment of the highest end, by the best means. And the progressive revelations of the majesty and glory of God in creating and upholding and governing all things, will bind the worshippers around his throne in growing ties of admiration, confidence and love. The highest attainments and brightest excellencies of men and angels will there be felt and acknowledged as the emanations of his supreme perfection, who fills Heaven as the light and glory of his creatures.

As the Stars shine by reflecting the light of the Sun, and keep their places by yielding to the force of his attraction, so will holy beings in Heaven reflect forever the light and love of the *Sun of Righteousness,* and hold their stations and pay their homage to him as the great centre of Spiritual Life.

There too, the walls of partition between good men being removed, it is probable that Patriarchs and Prophets and Ministers and Saints from every age and every country, will concentrate their knowledge and experience of God's dealings with his Church, in every generation, for the improvement and praise of the *General Assembly.* There all will be Brethren not in name, but in truth. No apostacy will there excite alarm. No alienation will pierce the bosom of friends. There too Ministers will meet all who have been *turned to righteousness* through their instrumentality. Not struggling with corruptions and harrassed with enemies or mourning for light and strength—but meet them, *having washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. And they shall come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.*

What a revenue of glory will that temple of righteousness unfold to the Lord Jesus Christ! The brightest splendors of the New Jerusalem will

gather around the Cross, and its highest anthems rise *to the Lamb that was slain.* No heart and no harp but will be in unison with that song, and the Angels and the Elders around the throne will say, Amen!

We are assembled to-day to render funeral honor to a venerable servant of Christ, who devoted his life to such a work, and has gone, we believe, to such a reward. Whilst we mourn his loss to ourselves, to the Church of God, and to society at large, we should be thankful that he was spared so long and lived so well.

Dr. JOHN ROBINSON was born within the bounds of Sugar Creek Church, Mecklenburg county, N. C., on the 8th of January, 1768. His parents were very respectable and pious members of that Church, and left many memorials of their faith and fidelity in God's service. By them he was trained up *in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*, and often spoke in after life, of their faithful concern for his salvation.

He received part of his Classical Education in the town of Charlotte, in an Academy taught by Dr. Henderson, in the old College building, and part near to this place in an Academy taught by Mr. Archibald. His College course of studies was pursued and completed at Winnsborough, S. C.

At what age or under what circumstances he became pious we are not able to state. The more important fact may be stated that his conversion was accompanied by a good hope of salvation through Christ, and followed by a full and unshaken determination to devote his life to the ministry of the Gospel.

He studied Theology under the care of the Orange Presbytery, which then embraced within its bounds, the whole State of North Carolina. He was licensed to preach on the 4th day of April, 1793.

On the 9th of April, 1795, he was married to Miss Mary C. Baldwin, in whom he found an amiable, intelligent, pious, and useful partner of his joys and sorrows—esteemed and beloved by all who knew her.

At the time he was licensed to preach he was directed by the Presbytery to visit Duplin county in this State. That was his first field of labor in the Ministry. He was the instrument of much good to the Churches he organized or built up in that county, and was loth to leave them; but the health of his family rendered it necessary. He continued there about seven years.

To the town of Fayetteville he was next called in the Providence of God. There he taught for several years a large and flourishing Academy, and from among his pupils, our State has found some of its brightest ornaments. But his usefulness was most signal in the Ministry of the Gospel. He was the Father of the Presbyterian Church in that place. He not only organized it, but received into its bosom, many who have been its pillars since. His labors there, embracing two periods, were continued about five years. His firmness of purpose, dignity of deportment, and courtesy of manners enabled him to exert an influence in such a community in favor of religion and public order and the good of society, which few men could successfully have attempted. The fruits of his labors are yet visible there, and acknowledged, with gratitude, by many witnesses. We have never seen any man move

through society, receiving more striking tokens of veneration and affection, than we have witnessed, shown to Dr. Robinson in that town.*

His longest and perhaps most useful Pastoral relation was with this Church (Poplar Tent.) For thirty-six years he was your honored and beloved Minister: making the whole period of his Pastoral office about forty-eight years. With what ability, zeal and fervent devotion he labored here, many present have long been the witnesses, and many who have gone before you, will long remember. Few connexions of the kind so long exist, with so many marks of harmony, and evidences of mutual confidence and attachment. His Pastoral care was not surrendered until the infirmities of age demanded it; and then it was terminated with all those feelings of good will and unabated attachment, which should ever characterize such an event.

Those who estimate a Minister's usefulness by his great efforts or rare sacrifices on peculiar occasions will be liable to be much mistaken. It is by keeping the *even tenor of his way*, amid the retired and ordinary walks of life, submitting his own will to God's work, and seeking to do good, under all circumstances, and to all men, that he is to make full proof of the design and greatness of his commission. How many fruits may flow from a life thus consecrated to the good of others for the sake of his master, and not for the applause of men, the bar of Judgment will reveal.

Dr. Robinson was a man of consistent and elevated piety. On all proper occasions his conversation and actions manifested his deep conviction, that no order of talents, no amount of learning or variety of gifts can qualify a man to preach, without true religion. The urgency and power with which he inculcated upon others to examine themselves, not by opinions or forms but by their fruits, indicated not only his honest sentiments, but the feelings of heart on this subject. We are permitted to rise above impulses and observances, in looking for the standard of his piety. We are referred to the long continued and well-defined actions of his life, regulated by one rule, and directed to one end. The grace that teaches a man to deny himself, to live for God, to watch for souls, and to adorn all the relations of life by a conscientious discharge of Christian duty, this is *the grace of God that bringeth Salvation.*

In his ministrations from the pulpit, one characteristic could not be overlooked by those who heard him: a clear and faithful exhibition of the doctrines essential to salvation. These constituted his delightful theme. Upon these his mind kindled with ardent emotion, and often with subduing tenderness. Upon the character, and love, and sufferings, and death of the Son of God, what penetrating words have you heard from his mouth? Upon Communion Seasons his animation and devotional feelings were evident to all who heard him. The Revivals of Religion with which the Churches were blessed at different periods of his ministry always found him among the front ranks, in attempting to promote the work of the Lord. The force of public sentiment sometimes urges men to countenance what they may give no very decided proofs of loving. How different it was with him? How easily did he seem to shake off the fetters of ease and enter with ardour into all the exercises of such merciful visitations to the Church; *rejoicing with those that rejoiced and weeping with those that wept!*

* See note A in appendix.

These evidences of a devotional spirit did not barely appear at favoured seasons, and then vanish before the rugged realities of life. Amid the sorest and most trying bereavements, his faith sustained him. In his conflicts with the world it armed him with energy. On the approach of death it consoled and cheered his submissive mind.

Benevolence was a lovely feature of his character. He looked upon *the things of others*, with anxiety for their happiness. His travels, and labors, and sacrifices for the public good, made up no inconsiderable part of his life. Where distress could be alleviated, he loved to go. When affliction called for aid and sympathy, he delighted in giving them. In the chambers of disease and around the beds of the dying, his warm and generous sensibility flowed with a deep current, and impressed the words of instruction and consolation. Into all the benevolent enterprises of the Church for the spread of the Gospel, he entered with cheerfulness and animation. Every plan which promised the promotion of good or the mitigation of evil, found in him an eloquent advocate and a liberal contributor. He was so free from a selfish or covetous spirit, that the accumulation of property seemed not to enter his thoughts, farther than the decent support and comfort of those dependent on him rendered necessary.

From that low and grovelling disposition which pines at the elevation or excellence of others, he was so far exempt, as to scorn the arts of detraction and hold in sacred esteem the reputation and prosperity of good men.

His profound reverence for God was manifest, when contemplating his works and attending upon the means of grace. It is to be regretted, that too often good men, in their attendance upon sacred things show, if not levity of manner, at least a want of that awe which the character and presence of God should awaken in the minds of all sinful creatures. When Dr. Robinson read the Scriptures, approached a throne of grace, stood in the pulpit or administered the ordinances of the Church, his solemnity was very striking and seemed to accord with the sentiment so often repeated by him: *Who would not fear thee O King of Nations; for to thee doth it appertain!*

His humility added a charm to his other virtues. He showed no reluctance in acknowledging his unworthiness. He was willing, at all times, to ascribe every good in himself and his condition, to the rich and sovereign grace of God. Rising above the low and numberless forms by which pride seeks for superiority, he appeared satisfied to fill his sphere of duty, and copy the example of his master. And how little indeed, would the airs of superiority, the forms of ostentation, and the reachings of selfish ambition appear, if held up in contrast with his calm, dignified, and noble deportment?

His firmness of purpose and intrepidity of character were acknowledged by all who knew him. Perhaps few men have been found, gifted in a higher degree with those endowments which constitute bravery. We allude to this, not to speak of it as a virtue in the abstract. Without the influence of higher principles, we are aware, that it has driven the scourge of misery through the earth. But we refer to it, to admire how the stamp of boldness impressed by nature upon his character, was moulded by grace, and made to harmonize with the forbearance, meekness and tenderness inculcated by the Gospel. With a courage that would not quail before any aspect or amount

of danger, was blended a disposition to regard the just rights of others, to sympathize with their sufferings and to feel, with the utmost tenderness, those endearing ties which cement and adorn the nearest relations of life.*

Dr. Robinson's personal appearance and manners were of the most engaging and polished kind. For that true politeness which flows from esteem and good will to others, which is marked by a ready perception of what the proprieties of life demand, and a decorous observance of all the usages of good society, he was distinguished in a high degree. In any crowd the penetrating eye would select him as a gentleman of the first order. In the pulpit his form and countenance and bearing gave commanding force to his sentiments. Often have his dignity and attraction of manner been felt as cords drawing men towards the truth, which he wished them to believe and obey. But few fairer specimens of a Christian Gentleman have been witnessed, than his life presented.

His punctuality was proverbial. Wherever you had good reason to expect him, you were sure to find him unless prevented by the Providence of God. In fulfilling his contracts, his appointments for preaching, and in attending the Judicatories of the Church, his exemplary punctuality was uniformly shown. Some years since the Stated Clerk of the Synod of North Carolina, drew up a statement of the attendance of its members, and if we are not mistaken, Dr. Robinson was the only member who had never been absent.—During half a century, we think, he never failed to be present at all the sessions of the Synod to which he belonged, until the infirmities of old age rendered it impracticable for him to attend.

He was a good Classical Scholar and retained to the close of life, a distinct remembrance of the studies of his youth, that was very remarkable. For many years he taught near to this place, and trained up for the different Professions a considerable number of highly respectable and useful men.

He was a warm and indefatigable friend of true learning. When an effort was made in 1820, to establish a College in the Western part of North Carolina, he was among its most active friends. When the more recent and successful attempt was made to build Davidson College, his zeal and efforts and sacrifices in its behalf were known to all, and continued to the close of his life. He was the first President of the Board of Trustees, and held that office as long as his declining health would permit.

As a Preacher he loved and held forth, the essential doctrines and great duties of our holy Religion. Having no disposition to build theories or to weave speculations, he proclaimed the truth as he found it in the Bible, in its penetrating force and majestic simplicity. Believing that sinners are converted and Christians sanctified by the truth, he declared it fearlessly and with affectionate solemnity. His prayers and tears and entreaties proved his humble reliance upon the Spirit of God to make it effectual to salvation.—He was a modest and judicious expounder of the Scriptures. He loved to dwell upon the plain, practical truth of God's word. His delivery was interesting, earnest and at times, very eloquent. His style bore all the traits of precision and perspicuity. There was no ambiguity about him. No hearer

*See Note B. in Appendix.

was left to inquire what he meant. His voice was clear, strong and melodious; and he had an admirable talent of modulating it, from the highest to the lowest key. With these graces of delivery, in connexion with his deep convictions of truth, his elevated sentiments, and warm emotions of heart, we are not surprised that he ranked among the best orators of his day.

The family circle was a dear one to his bosom, and he fulfilled its various and important duties, in the most exemplary and lovely manner. As a Husband, Parent and Master, his faithfulness, kindness and forbearance rendered his tabernacle the dwelling-place of peace and love. No one could know him at home, the best scene to test what men are in reality, without admiration for the excellencies of his character.

In 1836, the excellent companion of his life, was removed from him by death. How deeply he felt that sore bereavement, all his friends had reason to know; and could not overlook the humble and edifying submission with which he bore the trial.

With a pure and disinterested patriotism, he loved his country and stood ready to make any sacrifices or put forth any efforts demanded for its prosperity.

When the Temperance Reformation commenced in our country, he was among the first to take a firm stand in its favor, and persevered to the close of life, among its ablest advocates and brightest ornaments.

When his declining health called him to retire from his public labors, his serenity and cheerfulness and patience remained unimpaired, and added lustre to the evening of his days. When the summons of death met him, with composure and sustaining confidence in the Lord Jesus Christ, he resigned his soul to God, and departed in peace, December 15th, 1843. *Mark the perfect man and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace.*

Thus has fallen a great and good man in Zion—"*Not lost but gone before.*"

The memorials of his usefulness will long be visible below. Above they will be imperishable. It is probable that since you laid his body in the tomb, his mind has gained much more knowledge of God, and Christ, the wonders of Redemption, and the blessedness of the righteous, than in all his life before. And thus its attainments and enjoyments may enlarge and brighten forever and ever. We should praise God for what he was, and is now.

In one respect, my friends, you are done with his ministry. You will no more hear his voice preaching the words of Salvation. You will no more witness his fervent prayers and entreaties that you may love God and prepare for Heaven. In another respect you are not done with his ministry.—You are going to meet it, in the light which will shine upon your trial. As he has answered to God for his preaching, you must give an account for the manner in which you have heard the truth. You may now forget his instructions, and cover up the seed which he has sown. But hereafter you must meet the truth, and answer to God for its improvement. And if you fail of Salvation, what warnings and expostulations, will rise up as the dark mementoes of aggravated ruin! If you perish in this Christian land, and from this favored congregation, it will not be, without efforts made to prevent

it, which it will be awful to meet in the presence of God, and to have forced upon your remembrance through Eternity. Let me entreat you to ponder well, before it be too late, the mercy of God in securing to you the faithfulness of a ministry that has closed, and another that has commenced, for the good of your souls.

What a day of overwhelming solemnity will that be, when Ministers of the Gospel, and their hearers, shall meet each other before the bar of God! With what overflowing joy will those *turned to righteousness*, take their places with the Servants of Christ as Stars in *their* crowns of rejoicing! And with what wailings and unutterable consternation, will those who have rejected the counsel of God to their destruction, turn away from Christ's Ministers and from Christ's Kingdom, to the dark world of perdition!

And that day is coming. *Now* is the time to prepare for it. And the only *way* to prepare for it, is to believe and obey from the heart that truth which we honor God's Messengers for preaching. We need expect no other plan of Salvation than the Gospel reveals. We should rely upon no kind of preaching to give life, but that which leads to repentance for sin, faith in Jesus Christ and conformity to the will of God. And even this, will avail nothing, without the concern and concurrence of those who hear it. Those who make their *calling and election sure*, are required to *give all diligence*, when God works in them *to will and to do of his good pleasure*. It is not *the forgetful hearers*, but *the doers of the work*, who are blessed in their deeds.

It is possible to draw delusion to ourselves from the fact, that we are able to stand the preaching, which is *in the demonstration of the Spirit and of power*. Other causes than a love of truth may lead many to the sanctuary of God, and far different fruits from those of faith, may flow from attendance upon the most approved and searching ministry. Micah has not been the only man in this deceiving world, who has expected good from relation to the Priest, more than from the blessing of God in applying his word to the heart.

If any thing should awaken concern, it is the possibility of acquiring only blindness of mind, and obduracy of heart, under the very means which God throws around us, to secure our Salvation. This will be the sure result if we hear without proper improvement. His word will not *return unto him void;* but will *prove a savour of life unto life, or of death unto death.* And amid the coming retributions of Eternity, whose guilt will be without cloak, and whose perdition without palliation, but theirs, who will stand charged with *having trodden underfoot the Son of God, and counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and done despite unto the Spirit of grace! Take heed therefore how ye hear. We ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; how shall we escape if we neglect so great Salvation?*

APPENDIX.

NOTE A.

As evidence that the high veneration felt for Dr. Robinson by the inhabitants of Fayetteville, has not subsided through the changes of more than thirty years, the following proceedings of a public meeting, held in the Town House on the 23d of December, 1843, may be given:

Whereas, it is announced in some of the public prints, that it has pleased the all-wise disposer of all events, to call away from this sinful and suffering world, our venerable friend the Rev. John Robinson, D. D., the present meeting, consisting of persons to whom he has been long endeared, by ties of a most interesting character, desire, with the utmost sincerity, to give expression to the sentiments which they entertain in the following resolutions, viz:

1. *Resolved*, That, in our estimation, the death of such a man as the late Rev. John Robinson, D. D., is an event justly to be deplored, as a serious loss to a community, who have for many years, been permitted to enjoy the rich benefits of his wholesome instruction and godly and edifying example.

2. *Resolved*, That his public services, in this place many years ago as a Minister of the Gospel and an instructor of the rising generation, shall long be remembered, with emotions of gratitude and affection.

3. *Resolved*, That David Anderson, Dr. B. Robinson, J. W. Wright, C. P. Mallett and E. L. Winslow be a committee to devise suitable means for the erection of such memorial of his character and labors as may perpetuate the memory of his worth, and of his labors for the good of immortal souls.

4. *Resolved*, That these resolutions be published and a copy of them forwarded to the family of the deceased.

DAVID ANDERSON, *Chairman.*

JOHN MCRAE, *Secretary.*

NOTE B.

Many anecdotes might be given, illustrating Dr. Robinson's personal courage and some remarkable effects of his intrepidity of character. The following incident may not be inappropriate. When he lived in Duplin county, he was once travelling alone, to attend a meeting of Presbytery. Passing through a certain village, he had occasion to stop for accommodations. Selecting what appeared to him the most decent looking tavern, he asked for dinner, which was promised. He had not remained long in the sitting room, until a crowd around the bar of the house commenced using very profane language. Dr. Robinson politely remarked, that such language was very painful to him, and wrong in itself, and that he hoped they would desist from it. After a temporary pause, the drinking and profanity, again commenced with more insulting indecency than before. Dr. Robinson perceiving that the landlord was not only among the band, but a leader in the outrage, addressed himself to him, stating that he had called at his house expecting to find the civility which a place for the accommodation of others ought always to insure, and that he hoped his character as a landlord and the honor of his house would afford a shield from insult to a stranger. The landlord instead of appreciating a manly appeal to his character for good conduct, in a violent rage and with increasing profanity, rushed towards Dr. Robinson, swearing *that his house was his own, and his tongue was his own, and that he would do as he pleased*, and drew his fist as he advanced. Upon this Dr. R. rose up with a stern and commanding aspect and remarked: *Your house may be your own, and your tongue is your own; but take care how you use your fist.* The faultering landlord had not surveyed before, the majesty of his form or met the indignant flash of his eye. Instead of keeping up his attitude of attack, he cowered down in dismay, and commenced begging pardon for the insult. The crowd around the bar slunk away from the house, leaving the poor landlord, to the humiliating confessions of his meanness, in offering insult to a gentleman, and continued intreaties that Dr. R. would not make it public to the disgrace of his tavern.

NOTE C.

During the period of Dr. Robinson's ministry in Duplin county, he was once invited very kindly by a gentleman who had been educated in Scotland, to go home with him. He did so, and was much gratified, during the evening, by the fluent and appropriate conversation of the gentleman, on the Doctrines and Discipline of the Church, the Confession of Faith, Catechism, Solemn League Covenant, &c. &c. At supper the gentleman asked Dr. R. to ask a blessing and return thanks, and at the proper time, had his family assembled for prayers. The next morning after prayers were over, and the family had assembled around the breakfast table, Dr. R. concluding that a man who seemed to know so much about the doctrines and duties of the Church, had certainly some forms of religion, politely referred to him to ask a blessing. The gentleman commenced and went on, probably half through an ordinary invocation of God's blessing—there he halted, and turning to Dr. R. with an imploring countenance, said, *Will you please to finish, Sir?* This circumstance is not mentioned solely because it is ludicrous, but to show how small a matter may be overruled to awaken serious and salutary reflection. After retiring from the table, he came to Dr. R. and with tears he said, *You now see what I have come to—I was born of pious parents, taught religion in my youth, and observed its forms in my native country. But here, Sir, I have neglected its duties; and now cannot even ask God to bless the food of my own table.* So deep was the impression produced on his mind, by this trivial incident, that his convictions of sin, cherished by the means of grace, continued and increased, until he professed a hope of conversion, and was received into the Church; and as far as known lived consistently with its obligations.